

# **Town of North Smithfield Planning Board Meeting**

**Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street**

**Thursday, February 21, 2013, 7:00 PM**

**The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.**

## **1. Roll Call and introductions.**

**Present: Chair Dr. Lucien Benoit, Dean Naylor, Mali Jones, Art Bassett, Kerri Tunnicliffe. Also present were Town Planner Bob Ericson and Town Solicitor James Lombardi. The Board members each briefly introduced themselves to welcome the new alternate to the Board.**

## **2. Approval of Minutes: January 24, 2013**

**Mr. Basset made a motion to approve the minutes of January 24, 2013, as corrected. Mr. Naylor seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

## **3. Recommendations for National Grid Interstate Reliability Project: Discussion, vote or other action on letter of recommendations to the RI Energy Facilities Siting Board.**

**The Board reviewed a draft letter of recommendations on the National Grid Interstate Reliability Project.**

**Ms. Jones made the following motion: The Planning Board approves the letter of recommendations to the Rhode Island Energy Facilities Siting Board. Mr. Naylor seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**4. Proposed Zoning Map Change: William Peloquin, Plat 7, Lot 28 on Pound Hill Rd. Proposed change from RRC (REA-120) to RC (RA-65). Discussion, vote or other action regarding 1) consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and 2) other recommendations.**

**Mr. Ericson explained to the Board that the zoning zone change request is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, page D-24, Item #37. There is no option for the Board to vote on consistency, but that the request can be considered within the Comprehensive Plan's proposed REA zoning changes for the town. The Board held a discussion to clarify the details of this request. The applicant would like to create a four-lot subdivision and requested that the property be changed to RA-65. The Chair suggested that if the land was accessed from Pound Hill Road, one lot could be created from that access and the other three could be created by constructing a cul-de-sac. The Board agreed that RA-65 is not needed for this property and is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.**

**Mr. Naylor made a motion that the Planning Board find the proposed rezoning of Plat 7, Lot 28 to be directly inconsistent with Item 37 of**

the proposed zoning changes on page D-24 of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, with all in favor.

**5. Comprehensive Plan Proposed Zoning Changes: Discussion, vote or other action regarding down-zoning the four areas to Rural Residential Conservation (RRC, also known as REA-120) recommended by the Comprehensive Plan**

The Board discussed a list of REA-120 areas recommended for zone changes. Mr. Ericson explained that these changes would create pre-existing non-conforming lots, which is bad practice and should be avoided whenever possible. If these lots are created, property owners would have to go to the Zoning Board of Review for any type of addition, even if they met the setback requirements. The zone change cuts through another lot, despite the stated intent to match lot lines. There were other questions about some of the lots, such as no owner being listed for Lot 36 on the appraisal website

Mr. Ericson asked the Board for a vote on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, explaining that specific recommendations could be made later and sent to the Town Council. The Board expressed reluctance to proceed in that manner and decided to wait until they had more information on the lots. The Chair asked that Mr. Ericson to find out who owns Lot 36.

Mr. Ericson also gave the Board a review of three other areas in town

that are being considered for down-zoning: 47) Old Smithfield Road area--some lots will become pre-existing non-conforming, 52) area above Woonsocket Reservoir--some lots will become pre-existing, nonconforming, and 60) Providence Pike/Audubon Society area--no problems foreseen with this change.

The Board will discuss this again at the next meeting.

6. Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Preliminary discussion on amending the Comprehensive Plan by revising any now-inappropriate rezoning recommendations found on pages D-22 to D24 of that plan.

Mr. Ericson reviewed some of the areas targeted for rezoning in the Comprehensive Plan. He explained that these decisions were made based on 2006 knowledge, but that the town has better information now, including excellent GIS data. Better information will require revision of some recommendations. The Board discussed a list of the proposed zone changes that may no longer be necessary. Mr. Ericson also stated that the Town Council may not get all the zone changes done before the new Comprehensive Plan is written, but the Board should look through the list and let him know if they have any additions to his recommendations. When they have decided on list revisions, Mr. Ericson will draft an amendment to be submitted to the Town Council.

**Mr. Lombardi left the meeting at 7:52 and was not present for the remaining agenda items.**

**7. Zoning Ordinance Section 17 recommendations: Discussion, vote or other action regarding 1) consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and 2) other recommendations.**

**Mr. Ericson explained to the Board that in 2006, the Town Council failed to approve Section 17 of the Zoning Ordinance. The published version of this section has been compared to that in the Municode, and has been edited to include the amendments that were intended to be passed at that time. He asked the Board to vote on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as a first step to have it reviewed by the Town Council. The document has already been submitted to the Town Council by one of the Council members and will be sent to the Planning Board for a vote on consistency. After that vote, the Board can make recommendations on revisions to the document.**

**The Board discussed at great length whether they should vote for consistency of this document if they will be sending recommendations for revision at a later date. Ms. Jones and Mr. Naylor stated that they would rather wait to vote on the revised document. Mr. Ericson stated that the best place to start is with the document that was originally intended to be passed. He explained that the Board cannot find it inconsistent or the process will end there, which will drag everything out further. The Board decided to**

hold off on voting on consistency until the next meeting. They asked to be given copies of the document exactly as it has been submitted to the Town Council.

The Board also discussed potential revisions to be sent to the Town Council in the future, including the creation of a Technical Review Committee (TRC). Ms. Jones stated that she is not comfortable creating a committee based on positions that do not currently exist (ie, town engineer). Mr. Naylor stated that the committee as proposed did not include some town entities that should be involved, such as the Conservation Commission and Sewer Department. The Board suggested adding, “other bodies as needed” and adding “when appointed” to the inclusion of the town engineer. Mr. Bassett was concerned that the TRC would be taking away some of the Planning Board’s authority, but Mr. Ericson stated that the committee will send its detailed report to the Board, which will then vote on the plan.

#### **8. Capital Budget: Discussion, vote or other action on capital budget items for Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and School Department**

The Board discussed the capital budget requests from the Department of Public Works (DPW), Parks and Recreation, and a portion of the School Department’s request. The main concerns the Board had with DPW and Parks and Recreation were the need for more information on requests and that the departments could do more integrating of services instead of duplicating expensive

**purchases.**

**For the DPW, the Board requested additional prices for new and late model used vehicles, explanation of costs involved in hiring private plow trucks, justification of need for a new vehicles (information on current fleet inventory, mileage, average maintenance costs, records on current vehicles), and a written justification of why the department will not be doing any paving in the coming fiscal year.**

**For Parks and Recreation, the Board requested more detail on any requests over \$10,000.**

**For the School Department, the Board only discussed the requests for maintenance and improvements for Halliwell School. They agreed that expensive upgrades, including a request for new security systems, were hard to consider when the school is in need of such extensive maintenance and repair. Mr. Bassett made a motion to recommend that there be no further investment to Halliwell School and that the School Department should plan for the transition of students to North Smithfield Elementary School by September 2013. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The Board voted as follows: YES: Dr. Benoit, Mr. Naylor, Ms. Jones, Mr. Bassett. Ms. Tunncliffe abstained. Motion passed, with a vote of 4-0.**

**Ms. Tunncliffe made a motion to recommend that the DPW, Parks & Recreation, and school facilities consolidate capital investment and**

**operations. Mr. Naylor seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**9. Planning update: Summary of new developments with Dowling Village, planned culvert repairs, meetings schedule.**

**Mr. Ericson stated that Lowes is open at Dowling Village and has been very busy in its opening week. Other updates included: the wind turbine land lease proposal is being reviewed, the updated Land Development and Subdivision Regulations will be published as a looseleaf document paginated by section, which will make future revision easier, and the Johnson Controls contract is nearing its end. The project results are being submitted to the DOE's Energy Portfolio Manager as a requirement of participation in the Better Building Challenge.**

**Mr. Bassett made a motion to adjourn at 9:53 pm. Mr. Naylor seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**Submitted by Angela Pugliese, February 25, 2013**